



Northern Ireland
Assembly

**COMMITTEE FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

WEDNESDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2014

ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Robin Swann MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Phil Flanagan MLA
Mr David Hilditch MLA
Mr William Irwin MLA
Ms Anna Lo MLA
Mr Fra McCann MLA
Ms Bronwyn McGahan MLA
Ms Claire Sugden MLA

In Attendance: Mrs Cathie White (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Vincent Gribbin (Assistant Clerk)
Mr Johnny Lawless (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Noreen Hayward (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr Pat Ramsey MLA

The meeting opened in public session at 10:01 am.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

2. Chairperson's Business

Agreed: The Committee agreed to send e-Christmas cards to organisations that briefed the Committee this year and that had hosted the Committee for visits.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2014

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting on 19 November 2014 were agreed.

4. Matters arising

- The Committee noted a list of matters arising from the meeting on 19 November 2014.

The Committee considered the Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service briefing paper on Public Procurement Competitions and Not-For-Profit Organisations: Current Cabinet Office Proposals.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the researcher to provide more detail on the section of the paper on the further education sector.

5. Correspondence

The Committee considered the following items of correspondence:

- Correspondence from the Northern Ireland European Affairs Manager providing the EU Matters Newsletter for November 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Response from the Ulster University regarding its engagement with the University and College Union over the proposed budget cuts.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Correspondence from the Public Accounts Committee regarding the involvement of Queen's University Belfast and the Ulster University in the National Fraud Initiative.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister for Employment and Learning and the two universities supporting the involvement of Queen's University Belfast and the Ulster University in the National Fraud Initiative.

- Correspondence from Springvale Employment and Learning Solutions thanking the Committee for the recent visit.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from Colleges NI providing additional information on student funding and the hardship fund.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental correspondence providing an update on the Northern Ireland Skills Barometer.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Response from the Speaker's Office to the Committee request for Glenveagh School Rock Band to perform in the Great Hall.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Departmental correspondence providing an update on the Departmental Savings Delivery Plans to September 2014..

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Invitation from the Centre for Economic Empowerment to the launch of research into universal childcare in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation to the Stranmillis University College Carol Service.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from the CBI to a breakfast with the Minister of Education.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from the Chairpersons' Forum to a breakfast meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from Queen's University Belfast to the winter graduation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

6. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the draft Forward Work Programme to 10 December 2014.

The Committee agreed to move to Agenda Item 11.

7. Draft Report - Legislative Consent Motion Pension Schemes Bill

The Committee considered the draft report on the Legislative Consent Motion on the Pensions Schemes Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to publish the report.

The Committee agreed to move to Agenda Item 7.

8. Ministerial Briefing - 2015 -2016 Budget

10:08 am The Minister and his officials joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Dr S Farry, Minister for Employment and Learning, Mr Derek Baker, Permanent Secretary, Ms Heather Cousins, Deputy Secretary and Mr Stephen McMurray, Director of Finance.

10:09 am Mr Phil Flanagan joined the meeting.

10:16 am Mr David Hilditch joined the meeting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The Minister agreed to provide the Committee with a briefing paper on the funding arrangements and costs of students going to the university outside of Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Minister agreed to provide the Committee with an updated Structure for Success paper when available.

10:53 am Mr William Irwin joined the meeting.

10:59 am Ms Claire Sugden joined the meeting.

Mr Flanagan declared an interest as a student at the University of Ulster.

11:40 am Mr Fra McCann left the meeting

Agreed: The Minister agreed to return to the Committee in the New Year to provide a further update on the budget.

11:48 am The Minister and his officials left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to draft a response to the Committee for Finance and Personnel on the Budget 2015 -2016.

9. Departmental Briefing - New Further Education Strategy

11:52 am The Departmental officials joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Daryl Young, Deputy Director of Further Education and Mrs Margaret McKenna, Head of Further Education Strategy Programme Branch.

12:02 pm Mr Fra McCann re-joined the meeting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The officials agreed to provide the Committee with further financial information on the entitlement framework and apprenticeships.

12:24 pm The Departmental officials left the meeting.

10. Departmental Briefing - Update on Graduating to Success and Access to Success

12:25 pm The Departmental officials joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Ms Heather Cousins, Deputy Secretary, Ms Sian McCleave, Acting Director of Higher Education Division, Mr Kieran Mannion, Head of Higher Education Widening Participation Branch and Mr Tim Devine, Head of Management Development and Investors in People.

12:29 pm Mr Phil Flanagan left the meeting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

12:47pm Ms Anna Lo left the meeting.

Agreed: The officials agreed to provide the Committee with the report on Widening Participation in Northern Ireland when available.

1:01pm Mr Fra McCann left the meeting.

1:02 pm Mr David Hilditch left the meeting.

1:05 pm The Departmental officials left the meeting.

11. Departmental Briefing - Steps 2 Success

1:06 pm The Departmental officials joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Brendan McCann, Head of the New Employment Team, Mr Colin Woods, Head of Contract Management Review Branch and Mrs Angela Whiteside, Quality Improvement Adviser.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The officials agreed to provide the Committee with the management information being collated by the Department on the Contractors to the Committee when available.

1:24 pm The Departmental officials left the meeting.

12. Any other business

None.

13. Date, time and place of next meeting

The Committee noted that the next meeting should be held on Wednesday 3 December 2014 at 1.00 pm in the Mellon Country House Hotel, Omagh as part of its Inquiry evidence event.

1:25 pm The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Mr Robin Swann MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Employment & Learning

10 December 2014